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The H1N1 Virus: What You Should Know

What is the H1N1 virus?

The H1N1 virus (swine flu) is a respiratory disease in pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that cause regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. H1N1 viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

What are the signs and symptoms of the H1N1 virus in people?

The symptoms of the H1N1 virus in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with the H1N1 virus infection in people. Like seasonal flu, the H1N1 virus may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How does the H1N1 virus spread?

Spread of this H1N1 virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

How can someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 or more days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Source: www.cdc.gov

What can I do to protect myself from getting the H1N1 Virus?

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, the CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Source: www.cdc.gov

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Its Flu Season! Strengthen Your Immune System

What is the immune system?

The immune system is a network of cells and organs in your body that work together to defend you against illness. Your immune system blocks germs like foreign bacteria and viruses from getting into your body. Acting as a powerful "search and destroy" task force, your body deploys a host of immune cell forces that are designed to hunt down the unwanted germs and ultimately work to destroy them. The immune system provides the human body with an innate ability to manufacture antibodies (proteins) that work to destroy abnormal or foreign cells. These antibodies not only help fend off common illnesses like the flu or a cold, but they also play a role in protecting you against diseases like cancer and heart disease.

You also have a second protective immune response known as the "cell-mediated immune system." This response involves immune system cells rather than antibodies. These immune system cells are called either helper or killer cells, and they help your body create memory of past defenses against the infection caused by viruses or bacteria.

Once the body identifies a pathogen (invader) again, it calls upon the memory of the previous infection and sets out to destroy the invader before the infection spreads. When you get a flu shot you're getting a deliberate but harmless form of the pathogen so that your immune cells can react, learn, and remember how to produce antibodies to fight the pathogen.

What causes the immune system to weaken?

Your immune system can lose some of its protective effects when your body is constantly subjected to negative health habits such as a poor diet, little sleep, and too much stress. This is why it is not surprising that doctors frequently recommend certain lifestyle changes as a way to optimize the function of your immune system.

The stress factor:

A high level of stress will cause the body to produce a steady cascade of stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline. These stress hormones will suppress the immune system and negatively impact your body's ability to stay well. Current research suggests that reducing levels of stress through relaxation techniques, regular exercise, and coping skills help your body maintain physical and emotional health. Moderate

exercise three to five times a week also increases immune function by flushing out stress hormones and increasing antibodies. Be careful though, as working out too much (overtraining) can run down the immune system.

The sleep factor:

Get plenty of sleep every night. Prolonged sleep deprivation wears down immune protection while getting adequate rest each night helps to boost your defenses. Try to aim for 7 to 8 hours sleep for the best immune function. Tips for improving your quality of sleep include:

- Keep a regular sleep cycle
- Create an ideal sleep environment
- Decrease your caffeine consumption
- Move the TV out of the bedroom
- Avoid alcohol and nicotine
- Avoid eating before bed
- Clear your mind before bedtime

The nutrition factor:

It is wise to avoid refined sugar as it is known to upset body chemistry and weaken your immune system. A well balanced diet can help maintain your immune system. The following nutritional tips are recommended for strengthening your immune system:

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Choose foods high in antioxidants
- Keep hydrated: At least eight 8 oz glasses of water, or insure that your urine is always clear
- Avoid caffeine in excess
- Include fresh herbs and spices in your meals
- Consume an adequate amount of fiber (30-40g/day)
- Add Omega 3 oils to your diet
- Include more fish and limit red meats whenever possible

Source: Wellness Councils of America & www.medicinenet.com

Fruit of the Month



Figs

Figs, one of mankind's oldest fruits, are only now receiving their due attention in homes across the United States. Although considered a fruit, the fig is actually a flower inverted into itself. They are the only fruit to ripen on the tree. Originally native from Turkey to northern India, the fig fruit spread to many of the Mediterranean countries. The primary producers of dried figs today are the United States, Turkey, Greece, and Spain. This highly nutritious fruit arrived in the United States with Spanish missionaries who settled in Southern California in 1759. Fig trees were soon planted throughout the state.

Availability

Fresh figs are available July through September. Dried figs are never out of season, and are available all year. You can find them in your favorite grocery store in the produce or dried fruit section.

Storage

Look for figs that are soft and smell sweet. Handle carefully because their fragile skins bruise easily.

Recipe of the Month: Fig Banana Smoothie

Makes 4 servings

Each serving equals 1 cup of fruit or vegetables

Ingredients

- 1 cup chopped dried figs (stems removed)
- 1 cup 1-inch banana slices
- 1 cup plain non-fat yogurt
- 3 cups crushed ice
- 1 Tbsp honey
- mint leaf or berry garnish

Place all ingredients except garnish in a blender (not a food processor), and blend until smooth, approximately 2-3 minutes. Strain liquid and pour into tall, chilled glasses. Add garnish.

Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 200, Fat 1g, Calories From Fat 5, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 49g, Fiber 6g, Sodium 40mg, Sugars 36g.

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

September Wellness Tips

Nutrition Tip

Egg substitute is cholesterol-free. It is the egg yolk that contains all of the cholesterol and saturated fat (213mg in one egg w/yolk compared to 0mg in the egg substitute). The recommendation is to limit your intake of egg yolks to no more than 2 per week. You can substitute two egg whites for each whole egg in recipes or use the cholesterol-free egg substitute.

Fitness Tip

If you are looking for physical activity to help burn calories, consider the following facts for a 170-pound person:

- An hour of jogging burns 540 calories
- An hour of aerobic dance burns 460 calories
- An hour of brisk walking burns 310 calories
- An hour of weight-training burns 230 calories
- An hour of reading burns 45 calories
- An hour of sitting burns 25 calories

Health Tip

Laugh it Off. Have you ever heard the expression, "Laughter is the best medicine"? The truth is, when you laugh, several positive things happen: Your muscles relax; stress hormone production is reduced; you forget about pain; your body's immune system is improved; high blood pressure is lowered; the heart and lungs are strengthened; and overall, you feel better!

Mayor's Monthly Green Tip

Regular oil changes play an important role in maintaining the condition of your car, which helps it get the best fuel economy and minimizes air pollution. But do the oil changes themselves have an environmental impact? The Environmental Protection Agency reports that nearly 200 million gallons of used motor oil are improperly disposed of in the United States each year. Used oil from just one oil change can contaminate up to one million gallons of water, which is a year's supply for 50 people.

The good news: Used motor oil can be recycled to make new motor oil, processed into fuel oils, or used as raw materials for the petroleum industry. In fact, one gallon of used motor oil can yield the same 2.5 quarts of lubricating oil as 42 gallons of crude oil. If you are a do it yourselfer, take your used motor oil (whether it be from cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles, or lawn equipment) to a local service station or recycling center that collects used motor oil for recycling.

Source: www.ucsusa.org & www.recycleoil.org

2009 City Employee Flu Shot Clinics

(This vaccine does not protect against the H1N1 virus)

| Location | Date/ Time | Place |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| Pino Yards Bldg. D | 10.28.09 6:00am-10:00am | 5501 Pino Road, NE |
| APD Academy | 11.03.09 7:00am-11:00am | 5412 2 nd ST NW (2 nd and Montano) |
| City/County "Passport to Safe & Healthy Holidays Health Fair" | 11.6.09 8:00am-3:00pm | Albuquerque Convention Center, West Complex, SW Exhibit Hall |
| Aviation Department | 11.10.09 2:00pm-4:00pm | 2200 Sunport Blvd. SE Press Room |
| Solid Waste Edith | 11.12.09 6:00am-10:00am | 4600 Edith NE |
| AFD Fire Academy | 11.18.09 7:00am-11:00am | 11500 Sunset Gardens SW Rm 105 |
| Water Reclamation Plant | 11.19.09 7:00am-10:00am | 4201 Second Street (South of Rio Bravo) |
| Vincent E. Griego City Council Chambers | 12.03.09 11:00am-2:00pm | Basement of the City/County Bldg. |

Who should receive a seasonal flu shot?

Children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday

Pregnant women

People 50 years of age and older

People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions

People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:

- Health care workers
- Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
- Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)

Source: www.cdc.gov

H1N1 Vaccine Update

The NM Department of Health is working with providers throughout the state including hospitals, clinics, private providers and pharmacists, to provide vaccinations to protect people against the new strain of influenza (H1N1).

The Department is planning clinics statewide and will announce the dates, times and locations of clinics when they are scheduled.

Please see <http://nmhealth.org/H1N1/index.shtml> for more information.

Topics you would like us to discuss in City WellNews?

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